

Appl. No. 10/027,153
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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (original): An apparatus for converting sulfur compounds in a hydrocarbon stream, said apparatus comprising:

- a prewash section for converting hydrogen sulfide to sodium sulfide;
- a hydrocarbon feed conduit with an inlet in communication with said prewash section;
- an extractor section for converting mercaptans to mercaptides, said extractor section being disposed directly above said prewash section;
- a hydrocarbon product conduit with an outlet in communication with said extractor section; and
- a conduit having an outlet in communication with the prewash section and an inlet in communication with the extractor section.

Claim 2 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said extractor section includes a coalescer at a top thereof.

Claim 3 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein one vessel includes said extractor section and said prewash section.

Claim 4 (original): The apparatus of claim 3 wherein said extractor section and said prewash section are separated by an imperforate baffle.

Claim 5 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the inlet to the feed conduit to said prewash section is disposed proximate to a bottom of said prewash section.

Claim 6 (original): The apparatus of claim 5 wherein said feed conduit includes an inlet for water upstream of said inlet to said prewash section and an inlet for caustic upstream of said inlet for water.

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Claim 7 (original): The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the inlet to said product conduit is above said coalescer.

Claim 8 (original): The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said apparatus includes a regenerated alkaline conduit with an outlet in communication with said extractor section below said coalescer.

Claim 9 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein one vessel includes said extractor section and said prewash section and said extractor section includes a coalescer at top thereof.

Claim 10 (original): The apparatus of claim 9 wherein a spent alkaline conduit has an inlet in communication with a bottom of said extractor section.

Claim 11 (original): A process for converting sulfur compounds in a hydrocarbon stream comprising:

feeding a hydrocarbon stream containing sulfur compounds to a prewash section containing alkali to convert hydrogen sulfide to sodium sulfide;

withdrawing a prewashed hydrocarbon stream from said prewash section;

feeding said prewashed hydrocarbon stream to an extractor section to convert mercaptans to mercaptides, said extractor section being directly above said prewash section; and

withdrawing an extracted hydrocarbon stream containing mercaptides from said extractor section.

Claim 12 (original): The process of claim 11 wherein said hydrocarbon stream is fed at proximate a bottom of said prewash section and said prewashed hydrocarbon stream is withdrawn from proximate a top of said prewash section.

Claim 13 (original): The process of claim 11 wherein alkali containing mercaptides is withdrawn from said extractor section.

Claim 14 (original): The process of claim 11 wherein said hydrocarbon stream must travel through a coalescer before being withdrawn from said extractor section.

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Claim 15 (original): The process of claim 11 wherein regenerated alkali is fed to said extractor section below said coalescer.

Claim 16 (original): The process of claim 11 wherein the alkali in said extractor section has a greater concentration than the alkali in said prewash section.

Claim 17 (original): The process of claim 11 wherein an alkaline stream containing mercaptides is withdrawn from said prewash section.

Claim 18 (currently amended): An apparatus for converting sulfur compounds in a hydrocarbon stream, said apparatus comprising:

- an extractor section for converting mercaptans to mercaptides;
- a hydrocarbon feed conduit with an outlet in communication with said extractor section proximate a bottom of said extractor section;
- a hydrocarbon product conduit with an inlet in communication with said extractor section proximate a top of said extractor section;
- a structure for facilitating contact between alkali and hydrocarbon disposed between the outlet of said hydrocarbon feed conduit and the inlet of said hydrocarbon product inlet;
- an alkaline conduit with an inlet disposed below the outlet to said hydrocarbon feed conduit; and
- a mesh coalescer in said extractor section disposed between the inlet to said hydrocarbon product conduit and a top of said structure for facilitating contact between alkali and hydrocarbon, said coalescer structured to permit permitting no more than 1 ppm of alkali from passing therethrough during operation.

Claim 19 (original): The apparatus of claim 18 wherein an open settling volume is disposed between a top of said structure for facilitating contact between alkali and hydrocarbon and said coalescer.

Claim 20 (original): The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said structure for facilitating contact between alkali and hydrocarbon comprises a plurality of decks and said open settling volume could accommodate one of said decks.